

# Dear, Her Prose.

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# The Meeting.

We met in the cold rain. As silly as it sounds, it's the truth. She loved to debate, and that was something that I couldn't argue. She was headstrong as she was witty. Our conversations centered on politics, injustices, and changing the world. I was enthralled by her charm. *One day, I'll make a difference*—she'd say. I'd nod. I was the meek one.

# The Couch.

I was dressed in the silk top that I thrifted. It had yellow daisies—the collar wouldn't stay down. But, I loved it anyway. We walked from store to store—wanting to save money on gas and enjoy the scenery. *This one?*—I'd ask. She'd shake her head no while placing a finger on her pointed chin. I was getting annoyed—hungry—and wanted to choose a place to sit. For our new place. Losing sight of the time—I hadn't realized that I lost sight of her. Standing there, amazed at the worn and torn piece of cushion. *This is the one*—she smiled. The indentations in her cheek showing her enthusiasm. I didn't debate. The couch came home.

# The Rolling Papers.

Pink couch. I thought the color of the cushion—resembled her lips. I watched as she pulled—exhaled—and pulled again. I was in a daze.

# The Party.

The music was so loud. The bass—making the walls shake. As each note *bounced* off of the walls—I bounced between friend groups. Her friends, my friends—all coming together to celebrate our place. We had made it. A loft—which took months for approval. The decor—which took months of deciding. I looked out of the window—the glass fogged from the conversations, the smoke, the food on the stove. From the corner of my eye, I saw my other half. She glanced at me and winked. The *window* and *I* now had something in common.

# The Mundane.

We were settled. As two busy yet adventurous women could be. Work. Lunch. Sex. Back to work—her commute took longer. Dinner. Friends. Sometimes, dinner with friends. Jogs through the park, on the weekends that we were able. Sex. Clubs. So many clubs. Parties. Work. The days started to become a blur—the simplicity yet complexity of our lives. Conversations were now routine. Were we—still us?

# The Fair.

Wanting to get out of a rut—she surprised me. Two tickets, to the biggest fair, that came to the city. Pink and purple lights—a rollercoaster that *reversed* and *came back*.

## The Perfume.

The smell brought me back to her *every time*. It had notes of citrus, floral—with a hint of vanilla. I remembered the way she spritzed it on her wrist—hair—the back of her neck. The kisses that I planted on her were always met with that *scent*. It always brought me *home*.

## The Decision.

A promotion, that neither of us expected. It came out of nowhere. She was wonderful at her job. A true people's person, a true extrovert partnered with her introverted partner. Me. She hadn't considered me when she accepted it—accepting a move across the country. I feigned the excitement that appeared on my face. My nose wrinkled at the smell of her perfume.

## The Curtain.

I pulled on the string to close the paisley-colored curtain. The sun *setting*—the sky accepting its fate. I looked around our loft—the place that we called home would now be a sublet. I glanced at the luggage, full of baggage—both physical and emotional. From one of the brown leather bags, I retrieved a blouse. The silk one, with yellow daisies. I smelled it, embraced it, and held onto it the way that I would with her. So many memories. The couch—the party—the fair. I watched as the sun winked before lowering. With that, I pulled the curtain entirely shut.

## *Intermission.*

## The Band.

Drink in hand. New heels. New hair. New—*me*. The sound of the music glared. The audience—even louder. I pumped my fist into the air—one hand on the shoulder of my other half. My new love. In the platonic sense, that is. I didn't agree to the move. Which left me in the city. The city, that I thought would build upon a life with *her*. Across the country from one another, no longer a pair. Either way, the music of our lives continued to *play*.

## The Sighting.

Lovers turned partners—turned friends. Turned, *rare* sightings. The feeling of it all, *rather* scientific. Humanistic. Emotions were *felt* in my heart and *shown* on my face when I *spotted* her.

## The Thought.

Coffee in hand, I hadn't uttered a word. I watched as she walked—hand in hand—with someone else. Why was she *here*? Why was she in New York—of all places? We hadn't spoken in over a year. We hadn't *officially* decided—on whatever decision—that needed to be made. We carried on with our lives—as if—as if *us* were a *brief thought*. A *moment*.

## The Couch.

I sold it. It had no *place* in my new abode.

## The Blouse.

I gave it away. Someone else would have a better *use* for it.

## The Rolling Papers.

*High*—on my balcony at one AM. Vibrationally, rather *low*.

## *Intermission.*

## Stage Fright.

I had taken on a new hobby. *Acting*. Both figurative—and physical. Pretending that I was okay—and putting on a performance in a screenplay that I auditioned for in a state of mania. The curtains opened, and I gave it the *best* that I had. The audience appeared indifferent. Had they noticed—my lack of self-awareness? I wasn't okay.

## The E-mail.

Sorting through digital subscriptions—most that I had forgotten to *delete*—I noticed a subject line. “Hello”.

## The Invitation.

She was once my partner—planning *dates* never involved a *set time*. We lived in the moment. Until now. “Let's meet at the cafe on 40th”. “Okay”. I still crumbled and obliged.

## The Waiter.

He had given us *one* check. But—we were no longer a *pair*. We both stared at the black and white piece of paper, unsure who should pick up the tab. I awkwardly placed my hand on top of it. She hadn't noticed and

her fingers swept mine. I pulled away, embarrassed. “Let me”. She half-smiled as she pulled out her *black* leather wallet.

## The Bridge.

“It was nice to see you”. “Same”. We paused awkwardly. How did two personas—change their narrative—yet remain somewhat *intact*? I felt the wind blow—my short hair *attracting* a leaf. “Here, let me”. She offered. I agreed. As she pulled the *brown* leaf out of my strands, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of familiarity. Home. Comfort. She wore the same perfume. Was she—still *her*?

## The Announcement.

We had a budding friendship. Re-doing our narrative. Re-familiarizing *us*. Whatever us—she—me—would ever be. Again. Or not at all. In the same context that is. An E-mail. This time, I was prepared. I welcomed *any* greeting or conversation from her. “I wanted to let you know, first. I’m engaged”.

## *Intermission.*

## The Present.

Living in the moment. I was having the *time of my life*. This time, it wasn’t an act. I wasn’t acting anymore—the idea of being on stage, faded. Dating. Partying. Partying with my date. Truly painting the city *every color* that came to mind. Red, so much passion. Pink, a budding romance. And gray—a mixed bag.

## The Storm.

We—my new *interest* and I—were running in the rain. As cliché as it sounds—it was our reality. Running like two *strangers*, who met in a coffee shop, fell in love over equal *interests*, and decided to be together, forever. However, it wasn’t that simple. We—she and I—had met in school. Graduate students—wanting to influence the world—and maybe each other. Perhaps, we would have a happily ever after.

## The Argument.

“Tell me now, are you over her?”. I didn’t speak. “Well, are you?!” I couldn’t utter a word. I swallowed. My mouth was dry. I needed a sip of—anything to bring back my *voice*. She saw the way we embraced—at she and I’s graduation. *We*—from my *past*—were sharing a moment. A memory that *we*—from my *present*—should have created.

## Abroad.

This time, *my* bags contained only *my* belongings. As selfish as it was—I began to shift my focus. I had gained the confidence—the *drive*—to propel myself into a new life. As I boarded—I anxiously awaited my new *fate*.

## Fourteen Hours.

**Ascending.** My thoughts *began* with her. How we ended on iffy terms. I couldn't deny—that my love for my former—hadn't gone *away*. Maybe one day—we would talk. We'd work it out. I'd perhaps, e-mail her. Similar subject line that I read. Only this time—I'd want to rekindle. More than a friendship. Sans a ring on my finger, unlike my *former*.

**Descending.** My thoughts *landed* on her. The meeting. The Couch. The Mundane. The fair—how that rollercoaster *pushed* and *pulled*. How I felt alive sitting next to her, our hands in the air. Screaming, but from excitement rather than *hurt*. How the E-mail—the *second one*—had hurt me. How I wasn't prepared. Nothing. Nothing on this Earth could prepare me—or anyone rather—for the love of their lives—starting a life with someone else. How I feigned my excitement yet didn't attend their nuptials. How two years later—through the many acts that we *performed in*—I still wasn't over her. How, I wasn't sure if I'd ever be. How, a new life meant new lessons. New ideas. Worldviews. How—she remained the center of my mind. Focal.

Would we ever—be *us*?

## *Applause. Intermission.*

## Crowded Places, Familiar Faces.

India. I had been here a year. Fighting and helping women with inequalities. Educating on getting educations—bettering living arrangements. I loved it. Even more, I adored the culture. The food. A quaint restaurant—in the city center. I frequented it. As I paid for my order—I smelled a familiar scent. Thousands of miles away—I felt at home. And, it wasn't because of the homemade delicacies. No, this was something even more *familiar*. Even more *stable* despite the unfamiliarity of the *path* that it brought me. Not it—*she*. I turned around—my *former* now in my present life. Again.

## Cocktails, Mocktails.

“I'm sober”. I giggled. It was like we hadn't lost a beat. “I know I said I'd stop before—but this time is for real”. I nodded and smiled. After realizing the *chance* meeting—we hadn't *questioned it*. We embraced. I, here for work. Her, a solo vacation. Either way, the meeting had to be serendipity. Another cliché moment in my life, I concluded. Smiles weren't forced. Mine—from realizing her finger was *bare*. Hers—from a *joint*. I sipped on my *mango* infused rum.

## Here, There.

We decided on *her* long-term abode. I was already being *hosted*—by a host family—and didn't want to intrude. I also wanted to feel *free*. Free to—touch her. Free to—she kissed me. Free to—our kisses became more

intimate. Free to—I don't remember coming up for air. Free to—remember the passion that we shared—still hadn't *changed*.

## Homesick, Content.

Another day. Helping women who wanted to help themselves. Frantically checking my phone for messages from my *former*. Not quite my lover—but we weren't just friends. No longer strangers. Fresh out of her nuptials—I wanted to be *patient*. Yet, I wanted *us*. I couldn't deny that. I couldn't deny that I missed her. I couldn't deny that I still loved her. I couldn't deny that I wanted a happy ending—with her. She was home.

## Text Message, Keyboard Strokes.

I was back in New York. I *ended* my assignment a little earlier. I followed my heart. Back to the city, that I fell in love. Back to—her. My belongings were still in boxes. My luggage—sprawled across the floor. A ding alerted me back to *reality*. I saw her name—the *preview* had been turned off. I wanted to be *surprised* at *every single message* that she sent. This one—surprised me the most. “I need to grow. Wait for me”. “I love you”. “I love you too”. Because she was home—I knew what she meant. And because I loved her dearly—she knew that I'd wait. For however long it took.

The moon met the stars. I ordered sushi. Sat down at my computer. Glanced at my *new* curtains. And began to type.

### Dear You,

I hope this finds you well. In peace, in light. I remember the first time I laid eyes on you, those beautiful brown eyes. That voice that could light up a room. The twinkle in your eye, when you talked about accomplishing a new goal. The excitement on your face when you realized you had *made it*. Truly made it. I have watched you grow—I have loved every single second. Every single minute. Who would have thought? They saw the loft—but didn't know that we lived in a room at one point. They saw the careers—but didn't know the injustices we faced in the workplace. The depression that you went through. The manias that we both had. I guess I should say, *we* made it.

When you took the promotion, I should have come with you. I was scared. The east coast has always been home for me. I should have joined you, I should have come to Utah. I laugh as I write this, because I am sure that we would have *both* enjoyed getting used to rural pastures. I should have followed my heart then too—like I'm following my heart now.

I tried to get over you. After the move, after your wedding. I even dated, I had gotten serious with one woman. But, she wasn't you. No one could *ever* be you. No one could ever make me feel the way that you make me feel. Not in any other Universe—parallel or not. It's you, it's always been you.

We have been in each other's lives during many acts, intermissions, and drawn curtains. The cast has changed—plots have been a little confusing. But the two stars of the show—you and I—have remained the same. A sense of consistency that we know will never be experienced with anyone else on this entire Earth.

You are a beautiful woman. You will grow. I cannot wait to see you in full bloom.

I love you.

—Me